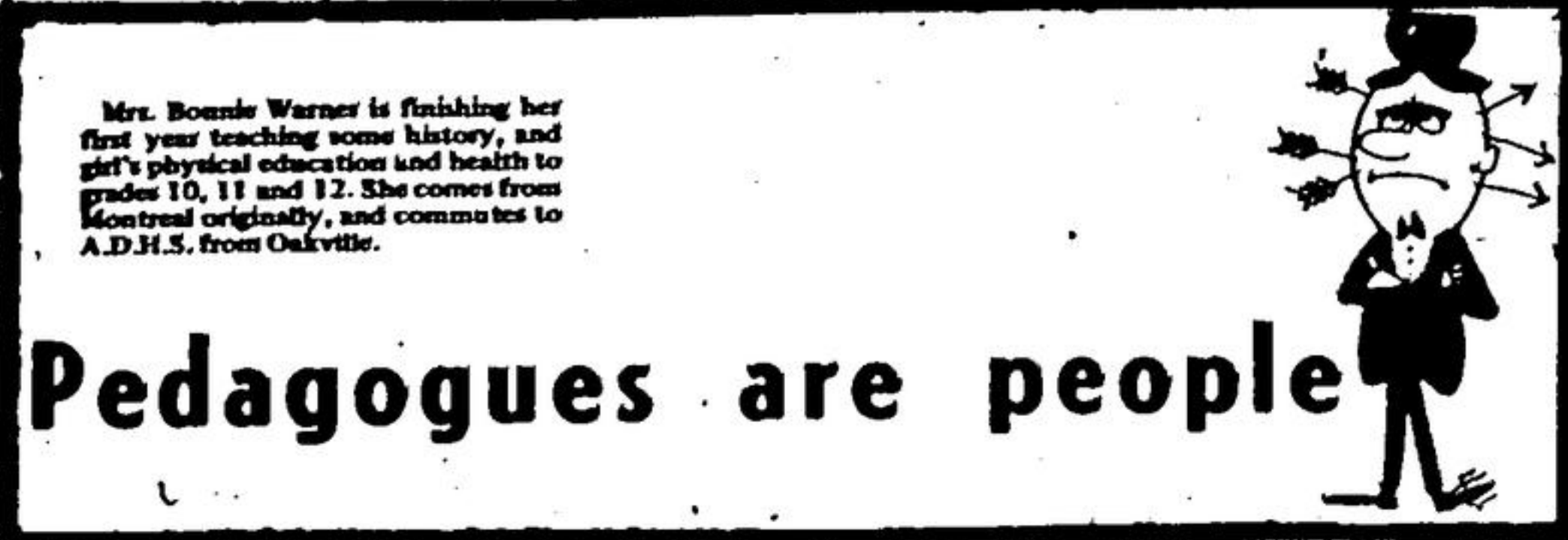


Opinions clash on compulsory class attendance



Mrs. Bonnie Warner is finishing her first year teaching some history, and girl's physical education and health to grades 10, 11 and 12. She comes from Montreal originally, and commutes to A.D.H.S. from Oakville.

Pedagogues are people

Mrs. Warner is a veteran of six years at university, although not entirely by choice. After three years at McGill in Montreal she graduated with her Bachelor of Education (Physical Education). However, she hadn't counted on marrying someone from Ontario and came west to discover her degree was not recognized in this province. After three more years at the University of Guelph, she got her B.A. in history and English.

Her interests have always leaned towards athletics and she was a regular competitor in high school track and field events. She also ran with the Lakeshore Track Club in Montreal for a couple of years and competed across eastern Canada.

Mrs. Warner commented on the fitness of A.D.H.S. students "I wouldn't say they are below average. There are one or two natural athletes and the rest get by." She regrets that Phys. Ed. is not offered in Grade 13 because she feels they could do with the compulsory activity.

Recently a new course in drugs was introduced into the school health classes. The program has been in the planning stages for some time and the first of the films on LSD and other drugs were shown in the past two weeks.

"I don't think the problem with drugs is so big right now, but I think possibly it might grow," she explains. The program is designed to present the facts. Mrs. Warner also believes sex education should be included in the health course.

She cites as her pet peeve "Students who complain loudly that they want freedom and won't take on the responsibility when they get it. The word 'power' is being used so much that it doesn't mean anything anymore."

On the new county school board she adds "I think perhaps we should give them more time before we criticize, although there are things right now we are not satisfied with."

Mrs. Warner and her husband are currently living with four cats in an old farm house outside of Oakville. Last year they sold cucumbers to a pickling factory for extra spending money. In her spare time Mrs. Warner enjoys working outside in the garden. She also likes to sew her own clothes.

A believer in jogging, she admits "I don't do it as regularly as I should."

This fall the Warners are moving outside of Kirkland Lake

and Mrs. Warner will be teaching Phys. Ed. in the high school there. Her basic philosophy: Keep calm, cool, and collected. Most problems will work themselves out.



Free Press

YOUTH PAGE

fresh tracks
by Barbara McIntosh

As part of the school's first Open House program last Thursday night, students, teachers and parents had the chance to air their views on what Chairman Ted Curtis called "the great goof-off", or whether class attendance should be compulsory for senior students.

A panel of six selected students and staff got the discussion under way before a capacity crowd in the library. Opinions ranged from strong support of forced attendance, to ardent pleas for student independence.

Bonnie Garvin, a grade 11 student, said she felt you should be able to skip a class if you don't feel up to concentrating anyway. She added, "You can't draw a line on who should come and who shouldn't have to, because there's no age limit on maturity." She felt students would realize that by skipping they would get behind in their work.

George Beshiri, in grade 13, agreed that students would learn more on their own initiative. He was for compulsory classes only to the grade 10 level.

English instructor Mrs. Nan Hurst based her opinion from a mother's point of view. "I feel

most parents want to know where the students are and without compulsory attendance there would be no guarantee. I would make some allowance for senior students making some special project outside of school but I would want to know that they were actually working on them."

"I fail to see why a person over 16 must be accommodated in school if he simply isn't interested," commented business instructor Boris Shean. "Give them entire freedom and let them cut their own throats. Only then will we have interested energetic students, happy teachers and an atmosphere for learning."

Bob Bonnette blamed much of the so-called student boredom on a system that demands a certain number of credits for a diploma. He stressed the need for more vocational programs for those who either have no interest or lack the intelligence to master the academic program.

Vice-principal Joe Bray was strongly opposed to complete student freedom. "The average student can look forward to at least 46 years of compulsory work before a pension. I think 16 is too early to go into retirement. I don't believe students have the

right to choose to fail while their parents are footing the bill. Without compulsory classes it becomes too easy to choose irresponsibility."

Speaking from the audience, Paul Nielsen voiced his opposition to a free system. "You

should be going to school to learn how to exist in this world. Later in your work you will face compulsion and routine every day of your life. You can't leave your work simply because you have a headache or you can't be bothered." He blamed a lax

administration for much of the problem.

Most parents in the audience seemed to favor at least some type of supervision and control. The students on the other hand seemed confident in their ability to get along on their own.



A PANEL OF students and staff lead a lively discussion on compulsory attendance during Thursday night's open house. (left) Vice Principal Mr. Bray, Bonnie Garvin, Mr. Shean, Chairman Mr. Curtis, Mrs. Hurst, Bob Bonnette and George Beshiri. (Staff Photo)

Compromise offered contract-to-learn

Under the leadership of guidance instructor Brian Skerrett, the administration is prepared to experiment with a compromise. A "Contract-to-Learn" will be offered to some senior students by which the student agrees to abide by certain basic rules for independent study outside of regular classes.

Under the new system, a student may satisfy his subject requirements in the following ways:

- (A) Without a contract he must attend all regular classes.
- (B) With a contract he is entitled to optional attendance at regular classes but he must show up for tests and exams and will be

responsible for the same work as the rest of his class.

In some cases he may be excused to work on an out-of-class project which will be marked independent of the class. The project must be approved by the teacher but could be suggested by either the student or the teacher. Contract students must report in each week on their work and find out about the dates for tests and essays.

Students who do not live up to the rules of the contract will in effect be cancelling their chance

to work on their own. Those students who are not on contract and who are absent or late without a good reason may lose the credit for their course and will

no longer be permitted to attend that class.

All students legally excused from classes will be expected to comply with school regulations at all times. Any contract can be cancelled by the student himself, the teacher, principal, guidance instructor or parent, if they feel it is not working out as planned.

Mr. Skerrett feels the contract system may be a help to many students, particularly those who are stifled by classroom atmosphere, but able to do excellent work on their own with definite guidelines. The effect should be greater academic freedom in the school and a test of student responsibility. The optional program went into effect last week.

Local teenage volunteers help retarded

In an effort to make life more colorful for retarded children in this area, a group of young people have organized themselves in what they call the Youth Committee for the Mentally Retarded.

Over the past year YCMR volunteers have devoted two or three hours each week to help with shows, parties and fund raising drives. However, more help is needed. A prime problem is finding drivers who are willing to go around the countryside and bring the children in for the events.

Active volunteers include Carol Kelly, Pat Holmes, Kathy O'Rourke and Donna Taylor of Acton; Sandy Waters of Darbyville; Arlene Crawford, Sheila Jeffares and Pat Briens of Georgetown; and Judy Grevenston, Vivian Rouce, Shanna McCoy, Barbara Cole and Karen Ricketts of Milton. Anyone interested in helping out should contact one of the girls in their town.

According to Gordon Dawe, current recreation director of the North Halton Association for the Mentally Retarded, there is no particular training needed to be of help. Volunteers discuss problems in weekly sessions with professional guidance. "You'd be surprised what these kids can do," he adds.

Gordon is confident there are many more high schoolers in the area who would find the work challenging and rewarding.

There is seldom a day slips by when I don't manage to get into some kind of mess but last Thursday was a winner. It was one of those honestly-everything-went-wrong ordeals.

To start off I slept through three alarm clocks and finally woke up by cutting my finger on a bed spring at 8:45. In an attempt to make it to work by nine I sprayed arid extra dry on my hair, scorched a blouse and ended up with the hiccups from downing a banana on the way down stairs.

Waiting to greet me at the office was a note on my typewriter reminding me I left off Diane Bonnette's name in the list of high school walkers even though she made it 46 miles from Thornhill. Worse than that, Ron Waites and Ted Saitz walked the full 65 miles from Newmarket and now their sponsors wouldn't believe them because I wrote they only walked 46. Also I got a peppery note from my mother, asking why I hadn't written to my grandmother.

During the morning, the bank discovered \$10 too much in my account, the camera broke down when I attempted to take Mrs. Warner's picture and I scared myself into thinking the car motor was going to blow up by unknowingly driving it in low gear for a few miles.

After lunch things seemed to be running evenly but by three o'clock-break I was exhausted just worrying about what else could go wrong. The coffee is generally pretty bad but after two or three sips I decided that cut wasn't worth my dime. I lodged a complaint and discovered I had dipped into the pot they had just rinsed the machine with.

At that I decided the situation was becoming dangerous. Quite obviously this wasn't just my usual bad luck. Perhaps someone had put a hex on me.

A few years ago, I used to make voodoo dolls of a certain rival girlfriend, wish hard on them and then flush them down the toilet. But it was an awfully long time to hold a grudge and that boy hasn't married either of us.

A more logical solution seemed to lie in my horoscope. According to the stars I was doomed to some turbulence toward the end of the month, including financial set-backs, and frustrations in my work and social life.

I decided the best solution was to go home to bed and hope the situation would change by the next day. Then I remembered it was open house at the high school, so I prepared for the worst. I guess by that time, the heavens were clearing or something, because my only uncomfortable moment all evening was when I asked the unfamiliar lady pouring tea what her name was for the paper, and she turned out to be Mrs. Hansen.

I must remember to write down the dangerous days for next month so I can claim sick and avoid trouble.

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